

Proposal for New Instructional Program

I. Descriptive Information

Institution Submitting Proposal: Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC)

Title of Program: Medical Laboratory Technician

Degree: Associate of Applied Science

Other Programs offered in this field by this Institution: Phlebotomy with Industry Based Certification; National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) accredited.

CIP Code: 51.1004

Administrative Unit in which program will be located: Division of Health Sciences

Proposed date to initiate program: January 2017

Proposed Delivery site(s), and types(s) of delivery: Western Nebraska Community College campuses, hybrid/blended courses, didactic lectures will be presented on-line and student laboratory will be on-campus at the Scottsbluff Campus. Additionally students will be assigned to local medical laboratories to obtain clinical experience. General Education requirements are available at all three of the WNCC Campuses, some may require on campus attendance.

Date Approved by Governing Board: June 15, 2016

Description and Purpose of Proposed Program: The Associates of Applied Science Degree in Medical Laboratory Technician Program prepares students to function as Medical Laboratory Technicians who perform a wide range of routine and complex clinical laboratory procedures associated with blood and body-fluid analysis which play an important role in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of many diseases and in the promotion of health. A Medical Laboratory Technician assesses the reliability/accuracy of the testing, maintains and operates diagnostic equipment, evaluates patient results, prepares analytical reagents and controls, troubleshoots problems with specimens/analyzers, and performs other duties. The proposed curriculum is attached as **Attachment A**.

The Medical Laboratory Technician curriculum includes a combination of general education courses, online MLT didactic lectures, face-to-face student laboratory sessions, and clinical experience in a hospital or clinic.

Upon successful completion of the prescribed curriculum, the student is eligible to take an examination for national professional certification, and will be able to work in a variety of clinical settings that include hospital laboratories, physicians' offices, and clinics and blood donor centers.

The program is currently seeking accreditation by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS), 5600 N. River Rd. Suite 720, Rosemont, IL 60018-5119; (773) 714-8880.

Program Goals:

1. Provide a curriculum that will develop and produce skilled medical laboratory technicians that demonstrates entry-level competencies to meet the needs of the community and the medical profession.
2. Produce graduates eligible to take and pass a nationally recognized certification examination upon completion of the program.
3. Provide the opportunity for certified MLT graduates to obtain baccalaureate degrees that build on their associate degree.
4. Maintain a nationally accredited program through the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science.
5. Promote the medical laboratory profession in the community.

Name of Contact Person in the event more information is needed:


Jason Stratman, Dean of Workforce Development.

Address: Harms Advanced Technology Center, 2620 College Park, Scottsbluff NE, 69361

Telephone: (308) 635-6740 **Fax:** (308) 635-6704

If the program has a projected end date, please indicate: NA

Chief Executive Officers or other Authorized Officer Signature

 J. Stratman, Executive V.P.
Signature

6-30-16
Date

II. Review Criteria

A. Centrality to Role and Mission

Western Nebraska Community College offers assurance that the proposed degree is consistent with its role and mission of "Offering Vocational/Technical, Liberal Arts, College Transfer and Continuing Educations as defined in the Nebraska Statues and in the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*".

Western Nebraska Community College was established in 1923 as Scottsbluff Junior College an extension of the University of Nebraska, in 1929 it became part of the Scottsbluff Public School System. In 1965 it came under the direction of Scottsbluff County and in 1968 became Nebraska Western College. In 1973 the legislature formed the Western Technical Community College Area, which included Nebraska Western College, Sidney Technical College, and the Alliance School of Practical Nursing. In 1978 the Western Technical Community College Area Board of Governors placed it under a single college, multiple campus arrangement. In 1988 the Board of Governors discontinued the use of multiple campus names and changed the name to Western Nebraska Community College, in 1991 the State Legislature changed the area name to Western Nebraska Community College Area.

Western Nebraska Community College shall be a student centered, open access institution primarily devoted to quality instruction and public service, providing counseling and other student services intended to promote the success of a diverse student population, particularly those who have been traditionally under served in other educational settings. The College Provides:

Applied Technology Education

Including Associate of Applied Science degrees (AAS), Associate of Occupational Studies (AOS), diplomas, certificates, professional skills awards, and coursework to qualify individuals for entry into employment or to enable individuals to remain current, to upgrade skills, or to acquire new skills.

Transfer Education

Including liberal arts and sciences associate degrees (AA and AS) comprising course work which is comparable to the course work of the first two years of a bachelor's degree program and applied technology degrees comprising course work which may be applicable to the course work of the first two years of a bachelor's degree program.

Developmental Education

Including remedial programs, developmental programs, Adult Basic Education, General Education Development (GED) preparation, English Literacy Programs (ELP), and refresher courses.

Adult Continuing Education

Including career related programs and services for professional certification or improvement; Economic and Community Development including customized training programs developed for businesses and communities to meet needs such as occupational assessment, job training, and job upgrading and other programs and services that are within the scope of the Colleges expertise.

Public Service

Including vocational and personal development courses and activities not specifically identified in other priorities.

Applied Research

Limited to the enhancement of the instructional programs, student achievement, institutional effectiveness, and public service activities or related to faculty professional development.

The Medical Laboratory Technician Program is in line with the educational expectations of community colleges and will meet the growing need in the Nebraska Panhandle.

B. Evidence of Need and Demand

1. National Demand Data

Medical Laboratory Technicians are in high demand regionally and nationally. Vacancies have increased significantly as many institutions require technicians 24 hours a day. Rapid job growth and excellent job opportunities are expected. While most jobs continue to be in hospitals, employment in other settings is growing steadily. The estimated demand for Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists was estimated at 161,200 in 2012. Between 2012-2025 demand for Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists is expected to increase by 22%. The projected demand by 2025 is 196,900. Projection is provided by the National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. An excerpt is presented in **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1 - MLT Job Demand (Nationally)¹

This fact sheet presents the national demand for select health technologist and technician occupations for 2012 through 2025 using HRSA's Health Workforce Simulation Model (HWSM).

Exhibit 1. Estimated Demand for Selected Health Technologists and Technicians in the U.S., 2012 – 2025

Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians

Demand:

Estimated demand, 2012	161,200
Total demand growth, 2012-2025 (22% increase)	35,400
TOTAL	196,900

2. Regional Demand Data

Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI) services Community Colleges in several ways. These include:

1. Program Planning
2. Communication and Outreach
3. Review and Development

EMSI data was extracted for job demand in the WNCC service area. EMSI data projects continual job growth through 2020, with the highest concentration

of jobs being in Scotts Bluff and Cheyenne Counties. **Figure 2** presents regional employment data from EMSI reporting.

Figure 2 – MLT Job Demand (Regionally)²

Regional Breakdown



County	2020 Jobs
Scotts Bluff County, NE	76
Cheyenne County, NE	21
Box Butte County, NE	<10
Dawes County, NE	<10
Sheridan County, NE	<10

Work Environment:

60.10%	General Medical Surgical Hospitals
18.00%	Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories
5.10%	Physician Offices
3.00%	Colleges, Universities and Professional Schools

Regional Trends-EMSI Data Set



3. Local Demand

This Degree Program is supported by the Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network; a consortium of the following nine hospitals:

- Regional West Medical Center-Scottsbluff, NE
- Box Butte General Hospital-Alliance, NE
- Chadron Community Hospital-Chadron, NE
- Gordon Memorial Hospital-Gordon, NE
- Garden County Health Services-Oshkosh, NE
- Kimball County Health Services-Kimball, NE
- Morrill County Hospital-Bridgeport, NE
- Perkins County Health Services-Grant, NE
- Sidney Regional Medical Center-Sidney, NE

The President of the Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network submitted a letter highlighting the local need and demand for Medical Laboratory Technicians. Excerpts from letter are presented below and the letter in its entirety is presented as **Attachment B**.

“Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC) has an opportunity to provide a **Medical Laboratory Technology Program** in Western Nebraska. The medical laboratory technologist is an important part of the health care team and the nine Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network (RNHN) hospitals are challenged by the lack of medical laboratory technicians (technician) in western Nebraska.”

“Morrill County Community Hospital reports they had no applicants for a recently posted technician position. Due to the lack of local applicants, Bridgeport, Kimball, and Sidney are employing foreign laboratory professionals. The closest known Medical Laboratory Technician Programs are in Casper, WY, and North Platte NE.”

“Employment of Medical Laboratory Technicians is projected to grow 30% from 2012 to 2022, much faster than average for all occupations. An increase in the aging population will lead to a greater need to diagnose medical conditions, through laboratory procedures.”

C. Adequacy of Resources

1. Human Resources

One (1) full-time faculty will be assigned to the program. This will be a 230-day contract. This faculty will also serve as the Program Director. Adjunct instructors will be hired as necessary to assist with labs and clinical sites.

2. Physical Facilities

Didactic curriculum for the Medical Laboratory Technician Program will be primarily online. Primary laboratory space for the program will be located at the Scottsbluff Campus. The Phlebotomy Industry Based Certification Program is currently housed in a small lab at the Scottsbluff Campus. This space will be expanded to accommodate the Medical Laboratory Technician Program needs.

3. Instructional Equipment and Informational Resources

The Phlebotomy Industry Based Certificate Program Lab is currently outfitted with much of the equipment that will be required. However, additional equipment will be necessary. WNCC anticipates using approximately \$20,000 in Perkins Grant funds to meet this need. Institutional funds will be utilized to maintain program equipment and acquire additional supplies and materials for the program.

4. Budget Projections

Estimated revenue and expenses for a period of 5 years are attached as **Table 1**. Western Nebraska Community College has a budget allocation for the Phlebotomy Industry Based Certification Program that will be rolled into the Medical Laboratory Technician Program.

D. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

Other similar programs offered outside of the WNCC immediate geographic region include:

- *Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte, NE, which is 180 miles to the east of WNCC.

- *Casper Community College in Casper, WY that is 180 miles to the west of WNCC.

E. Consistency with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan

The Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education³ issued by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education in 2006, asks each college to fulfill its mission. This proposed program will further enable WNCC to meet this criteria. The plan defines the mission of the community college as offering Associates of Applied Science education and degrees. This proposed program specifically fulfills that role by the nature of the courses. Further the plan also calls for community colleges to further increase access to minority students. Currently 10% of the jobs are held by minorities that include Hispanic/Latino, Black, and Asian persons

regionally. WNCC has a large Hispanic/Latino student population and this program will provide an additional educational opportunity. The proposed program is being initiated to meet identified student and employer need.

1. Meeting the Needs of Students

Western Nebraska Community College's Medical Laboratory Technician Program is being initiated in response to regional demand. The availability of Medical Laboratory Technicians has been a regional industry problem for a number of years and organizations have had to resort to hiring internationally to fill positions. Students need the option of pursuing an educational program that enables them to secure employment upon completion of their coursework. Many prospective students have employment and family responsibilities, which limit both their mobility and time availability. For many, WNCC is the opportunity to continue with life-long learning.

There has been a consistent interest from former Phlebotomy students, medical organizations, and others to offer the Associate of Applied Science Medical Laboratory Technician Program. The curriculum allows students the opportunity to earn an Associates in Applied Science Degree, as well as nationally recognized certifications in their field.

In an effort to ensure that students have opportunities beyond the Associate of Applied Science Degree, WNCC in collaboration with the University of Nebraska Medical Center Department of Laboratory Sciences, the University of Wyoming Department of Laboratory Sciences, and Casper Community College Department of Laboratory Sciences, made the effort to align the curriculum to ensure a successful transfer of educational credits from WNCC to those institutions. Additionally, accrediting measures with National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) are required for student's eligibility to take nationally recognized industry based certification exams. The WNCC Phlebotomy Industry Based Certification Program has been NAACLS accredited since its inception in 2008. With that in place, the additional requirements to extend accreditation to the Medical Laboratory Technician Program are known and achievable.

To ensure maximum access to the program regionally, the didactic portion of the program will be online, with the laboratory/clinical components being required on site at the Scottsbluff Campus and at various approved clinical sites in the region. Students that complete the prescribed curriculum and become Licensed Medical Laboratory Technicians can expect a median hourly wage of \$21.06 as a Certified Medical Laboratory Technician in 2013.⁴

General Education requirements for the AAS degree may or may not have an online component and thus students will need to attend those classes as required to satisfy the General Education Requirements for the degree at any of the three of the campus locations in the region. WNCC provides comprehensive support services to students at all three of our campuses. These include: basic assessment skills, tutoring, career counseling, library services, counseling, and student life activities as they wish to engage.

2. Meeting the Needs of our State

With Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians in short supply regionally, demand for these jobs is already high. With the changes in demographics and aging populations, the need is expected to increase yearly with projections out to 2025 of 22%. Advances in medicine require highly skilled, well trained individuals to perform ever increasing complex activities in highly regulated environments. Programs such as this will ensure a steady flow of these individuals into the workforce to meet the demand.

3. Meeting Educational Needs Through Partnerships and Collaboration

WNCC has worked with the nine regional hospitals in Western Nebraska that comprise what they refer to as the Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network (RNHN). WNCC has had a working relationship with all nine of those hospitals over the past 9 years as part of the Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network Training Academy. Using this Academy, participants are able to continually stay in touch with and meet the educational needs that arise with the RNHN as a whole, or for each organization as a single entity. Attached is a letter from the President of Regional West Health Services and Chairman of RNHN, to the President of WNCC extending support to the development of the program. Additionally, the North Platte Area Health Education Center (NP-AHEC) has offered their support behind the development of the program for the region. WNCC has worked collaboratively with NP-AHEC since its inception in our region to assist in providing identified needs in health education as they arise. The American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) is the premier credentialing body for individuals in all aspects of Laboratory Science, including Medical Laboratory Technicians. WNCC has a formalized partnership with one of the national members of their board, who works as a Laboratory Director in a regional hospital and has endorsed development of the program. Letters of support can be found in **Attachment B**.

F. Resources

¹ American Society for Clinical Pathology Task Force on the Laboratory Professionals Workforce

² EMSI Q4 2015 Data Set/www.economicmodeling.com

³ Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (2006); *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*.

⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Dept. of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook 2014-15 edition*.

TABLE 1
EXPENSE AND REVENUE PROJECTIONS

TABLE 1
PROJECTED MLT PROGRAM EXPENSES/REVENUES

	(FY 16) Year 1	(FY 17) Year 2	(FY 18) Year 3	(FY 19) Year 4	(FY 20) Year 5
<u>Personnel *</u>					
1 Faculty/Director (230-day contract)	\$60,000	\$61,800	63,654	\$65,564	\$67,531
Personnel Benefits (35% Salary)	\$21,000	\$21,630	\$22,279	\$22,947	\$23,636
Faculty Development	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Adjunct Instructor Support	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
<u>Program Budget</u>					
General Operating	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
Equipment (Perkins Funds)	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Equipment/Maintenance	\$1,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Total Proposed Expenses	\$113,000	\$99,930	\$102,433	\$105,011	\$107,667
<u>Revenues*</u>					
Student tuition (10 students)	\$31,500	\$32,445	\$33,418	\$34,420	\$35,452
Standard Fees	\$5,250	\$5,407	\$5,569	\$5,736	\$5,908
Program Fees	\$650	\$669	\$689	\$710	\$731
Books/Supplies	\$2,300	\$2,369	\$2,440	\$2,513	\$2,588
Rm/Board (7 students)	\$21,700	\$22,351	\$23,021	\$23,711	\$24,422
Total Proposed Revenue	\$61,400	\$63,241	\$65,137	\$67,090	\$69,101

* Assumes a 3% yrly increase

ATTACHMENT A
PROPOSED CURRICULUM

Medical Laboratory Technician Program

Program Description:

The Associates of Applied Science Degree in Medical Laboratory Technician Program prepares students to function as Medical Laboratory Technicians who performs a wide range of routine and complex clinical laboratory procedures associated with blood and body-fluid analysis which play an important role in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of many diseases and in the promotion of health. A Medical Laboratory Technician assesses the reliability/accuracy of the testing, maintains and operates diagnostic equipment, evaluates patient results, prepares analytical reagents and controls, troubleshoots problems with specimens/analyzers, and performs other duties.

The Medical Laboratory Technician curriculum includes a combination of general education courses, online MLT didactic lectures, face-to-face student laboratory sessions, and clinical experience in a hospital or clinic. Upon successful completion of the prescribed curriculum, the student is eligible to take an examination for national professional certification, and will be able to work in a variety of clinical settings that include hospital laboratories, physicians' offices, and clinics and blood donor centers.

The program is currently seeking accreditation by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS), 5600 N. River Rd. Suite 720, Rosemont, IL 60018-5119; (773) 714-8880.

Program Goals:

1. Provide a curriculum that will develop and produce skilled medical laboratory technicians that demonstrates entry-level competencies to meet the needs of the community and the medical profession
2. Produce graduates eligible to take and pass a nationally recognized certification examination upon completion of the program
3. Provide the opportunity for certified MLT graduates to obtain baccalaureate degrees that build on their associate degree
4. Maintain a nationally accredited program through the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science
5. Promote the medical laboratory profession in the community

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate proper procedures for the collection, safe handling and analysis of biological specimens.
2. Apply scientific principles, laboratory principles and measurement technologies for generating laboratory data on human specimens
3. Perform laboratory testing with accuracy and precision, with respect to timeliness

- of results and relay of critical information to providers
- 4. Correlate laboratory test results with common diseases or conditions
- 5. Operate and maintain laboratory equipment and instrumentation
- 6. Apply principles of quality control and quality assessments to all aspects of laboratory services: pre-analytical, analytical and post-analytical
- 6. Comply with established laboratory safety regulations and regulations governing regulatory compliance related to lab/pathology services
- 7. Demonstrate interpersonal communication skills, ethical behavior and professionalism, maintain confidentiality of patient information and participate in continuing education for one's professional development

Required Program of Study for Medical Laboratory Technician Associates Degree

Prerequisites:

Course

HLTH-1060	Medical Terminology	2 Credits
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First Semester

Course

MATH-0160	Introductory Algebra or higher if students plan to transfer to a four-year college/university	4 Credits
BIOS-1160	Introduction to Human Anatomy & Physiology	4 Credits
BIOS-1160L	Introduction to Human Anatomy & Physiology Lab	
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Laboratory Operations	2 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Phlebotomy	4 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Phlebotomy Lab	
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Practicum: Phlebotomy (100 Hrs)	2.5 Credits

	Total Credit Hours	16.5 Credits
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Second Semester

Course

CHEM-1500	Introductory Chemistry or higher if students plan to transfer to a four-year college/university	4 Credits
CHEM-1500L	Introductory Chemistry Lab	
SPCH-1200	Human Communication	3 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Hematology & Hemostasis	4 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Hematology & Hemostasis Lab	
MEDT-XXXX	Urinalysis & Body Fluids	2 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Urinalysis & Body Fluids Lab	
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Immunology	3 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Immunology Lab	
Total Credit Hours		16 Credits

Third Semester

Course

PSY-1810	Introduction to Psychology	3 Credits
ENGL-1010	English Composition 1	3 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Chemistry	5 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Chemistry Lab	
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Immunohematology	4 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Immunohematology Lab	
Total Credit Hours		15 Credits

Fourth Semester

Course

MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Microbiology	5 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Microbiology Lab	
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Parasitology & Mycology	3 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Parasitology & Mycology Lab	
MEDT-XXXX	Pre-Clinical Orientation	1 Credit
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Pathophysiology & MLT Review	3 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Practicum: Urinalysis (80 Hrs)	2 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Practicum: Immunology (80 Hrs)	2 Credits
Total Credit Hours		16 Credits

Fifth Semester**Course**

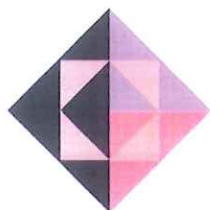
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Practicum: Chemistry (160 Hrs)	4 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Practicum: Hematology (160 Hrs)	4 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Practicum: Microbiology (160 Hrs)	4 Credits
MEDT-XXXX	Clinical Practicum: Immunohematology (160 Hrs)	4 Credits

Total Credit Hours 16 Credits

Total AAS Degree**79.5 credits**

Notes: Students who plan to transfer to a four-year college/university should consult their faculty advisor and the transfer advisor early in their WNCC enrollment to determine their curriculum.

ATTACHMENT B
LETTERS OF SUPPORT



Rural Nebraska HEALTHCARE NETWORK

A regional system of care provided locally.

John Mentgen, FACHE, President, CEO

Regional West Health Services

4021 Ave B

Scottsbluff NE 69361

RNHN President

Harold Krueger, CEO

Chadron Community Hospital

825 Centennial Drive

Chadron NE 69337

RNHN Vice President

James LeBrun, CEO

Perkins County Health Services

900 Lincoln Ave.

Grant NE 69140

RNHN Secretary-Treasurer

Dan Griess, FACHE, CEO

Box Butte General Hospital

2101 Box Butte Ave

Alliance NE 69301

Chad Thompson, Interim CEO

Regional West Garden County

1100 West Second

Oshkosh NE 69154

Ken Hunter, CEO

Kimball Health Services

505 S Burg

Kimball NE 69145

Jason Petik, CEO

Sidney Regional Medical Center

645 Osage St

Sidney NE 69162

Robin Stuart, CEO

Morrill County Community Hospital

1313 S. Street

Bridgeport NE 69336-0579

Julie Schnell, Interim CEO

Gordon Memorial Hospital

300 E 8th St

Gordon NE 69343

July 29, 2015

Dr. Todd Holcomb

President, Western Nebraska Community College

1601 East 27th Street

Scottsbluff, NE 69361

Dear Dr. Holcomb:

Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC) has an opportunity to provide a **Medical Laboratory Technician Program** in western Nebraska. The medical laboratory technician is an important part of the health care team and the nine Rural Nebraska Healthcare Network (RNHN) hospitals are challenged by the lack of medical laboratory technicians (technician) in western Nebraska.

Morrill County Community Hospital reports they had no applicants for a recently posted technician position. Due to the lack of local applicants, Bridgeport, Kimball, and Sidney are employing foreign laboratory professionals. The closest known Medical Laboratory Technician Programs are in Casper, WY, and North Platte NE.

In keeping with the WNCC mission of focusing on applied technology, becoming a medical laboratory technician typically requires an Associate of Applied Science degree, which WNCC offers. The technician program sets the stage for students to enter a career path that will provide job opportunities, a living wage, and professional advancement.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects rapid job growth for medical laboratory technicians, at a rate of 30 percent from 2012 to 2022, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. The average annual salary for a technician in western Nebraska is \$ 42,328. The Associate of Applied Science degree is the starting point for laboratory professionals going on for higher degrees and positions.

With most of the technician jobs in hospitals, the nine RNHN hospitals are very interested in building the laboratory professional workforce in western Nebraska. To assist WNCC with this program, the majority of the RNHN hospitals will be able to provide clinical rotations within their facilities.

In keeping with the philosophy of providing services locally and ensuring that western Nebraska continues as a great place to learn, live, and work. We urge you to implement the Medical Laboratory Technician Program at WNCC.

Sincerely,

John Mentgen, President



March 24, 2016

Dr. Todd Holcomb
President, Western Nebraska Community College
1604 East 27th Street
Scottsbluff, NE 69361

Dear Dr. Holcomb:

I am writing, on behalf of my profession and of the Board of Directors for the Area Health Education Center (AHEC), in support of the implementation of a Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) Program at Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC). As a laboratory director of a critical access hospital in Western Nebraska, I am continually impacted by the lack of Medical Laboratory Professionals and programs in the local area.

In my experience as a Director, and an employer, I have come to realize that individuals who are recruited from a different area don't tend to make a permanent home in Western Nebraska. They may stay for a while to gain experience, or because of a spouse's career, but then eventually desire to move back to where they came from or near friends and family.

The other avenue of gaining employment for the laboratory, because of lack of local interest, has been recruitment of individuals from the Philippines. Because of the involvement of immigration and lawyers, this process can be very costly, having a large financial impact on the facility, especially for a critical access hospital.

We have found that our greatest success with the recruitment and retention of qualified health professionals has been when we, as a facility, are able to create relationships with young individuals early on in their career decisions, whom are from the area. The opportunity for recruitment and retention continues when we are able to offer local education and an opportunity of nearby facilities for clinical rotations. Smarter, more financially reasonable choices for some young individuals when choosing a location for college, tends to be local schools that provide them the opportunity to reduce financial commitment by allowing them to continue to live with family while attending college.

The MLT degree provides a starting point for laboratory professionals who desire the eventual obtainment of a Bachelor's degree. The MLT degree also provides an opportunity for professional growth of individuals who have completed the Phlebotomy and Lab Assistant program, currently offered at WNCC.

Surveys show that due to baby boomer retirement and the shutdown of laboratory science educational programs, vacancy of laboratory professionals continues to increase at an alarming rate. This increase in vacancy combined with the increase of an aging population deems to lead to an impending crisis in the medical laboratory.

308.254.5825 • SidneyRMC.com

Committed to Quality. Committed to You.



Sidney Regional
MEDICAL CENTER

1000 Pole Creek Crossing
Sidney, NE 69162

In keeping with the role and philosophy of WNCC and its commitment to ensuring "that western Nebraska continues as a great place to learn, live, and work" please consider approving the implementation of the Medical Laboratory Technician program.

Sincerely,

Kalee Lipska, MT(ASCP)
Director of Laboratory Services
Member of Area Health Education Center Board of Directors



STRONGERTOGETHER
KNOWLEDGE+ADVANCEMENT+COLLABORATION+GLOBAL COMMUNITY+

March 21, 2016

Dr. Todd Holcomb
President, Western Nebraska Community College
1604 E 27th Street
Scottsbluff, NE 69361

Dear Dr. Holcomb,

As Chair of the American Society for Clinical Pathology's Council of Laboratory Professionals, a professional medical society representing the pathologists and certified laboratory professionals, I am writing to urge you to implement an Associate in Applied Science degree in Medical Laboratory Technician at Western Nebraska Community College.

Like other health care professions, the clinical laboratory is experiencing a critical shortage of appropriately educated and certified personnel. It has been reported that 44% of labs are having difficulty recruiting qualified staff. To compound the problem, the National Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a need of 11,000 laboratory professionals per year through 2022 with only 5,000 graduating from accredited programs each year.

It is important to remind you that most hospitals in Nebraska hire appropriately educated and certified laboratory professionals. However, ASCP's Council of Laboratory Professionals is concerned about the possibility of hospitals and other medical laboratories beginning to hire non-certified individuals in response to the continued shortage. When this occurs (not if it occurs), we believe that **public safety and quality health care** will be sacrificed! The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) reports that the incidents of failure to follow instructions may occur in as many as 60,000 laboratories and that this may "potentially harm patients." Research indicates that more accurate laboratory results occur when laboratories use only certified testing personnel. Without certified laboratory professionals, ASCP cannot assure you that your medical laboratory test is performed by someone with appropriate education and certification.

There are solutions to these critical problems: (1) Legislation addressing the shortage of health care professionals needs to include not only nurses and physicians, but also the clinical laboratory professionals who determine whether or not that sample "sent to the laboratory is tested correctly by a qualified and licensed professional. (2) Scholarships and funding for health care professions need to include clinical laboratory students and (3) **development of clinical laboratory educational programs to counter the growing shortage.**

These problems will not be solved easily. The ASCP's Council of Laboratory Professionals is working to inform and educate our patients, other healthcare professionals, our State Representatives and Senators and you, the public. It is important that you and your loved ones receive the highest quality health care possible – and that includes quality laboratory results.

In conclusion, we sincerely hope that you will be willing to implement the Medical Laboratory Technician Program at WNCC. Your affirmation and enhanced support of a program of purpose, quality and necessity will provide competent and caring laboratory practitioners for the State of Nebraska.

Sincerely,

Rex F. Famitangco, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM} QLC, MT(AMT)CLC AHI
Chair, Council of Laboratory Professionals
American Society for Clinical Pathology